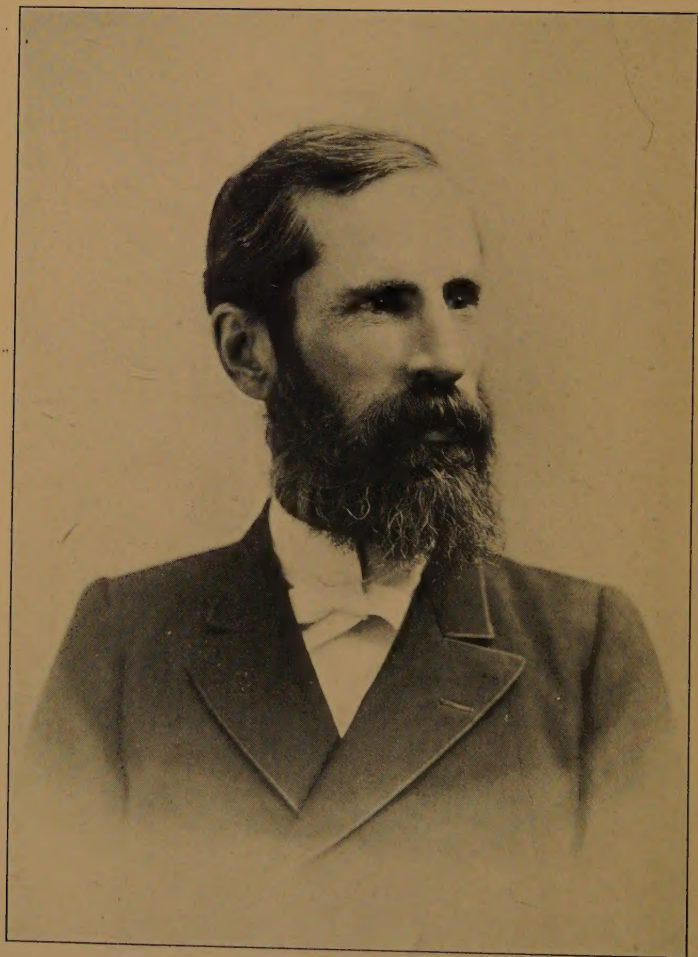


THE HERETIC'S DEFENSE

HENRY PRESERVED SMITH

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The Heretic's Defense



Henry Preserved Smith in the Prime of Life

THE HERETIC'S DEFENSE

A FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY

BY
HENRY PRESERVED SMITH

NEW YORK
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1926

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TO THE FACULTY OF
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
WITH WARM REGARD
THE AUTHOR

61167

Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. IN GOOD STANDING	11
III. FACING THE FACTS	37
IV. SPACE AND TIME	51
V. THE CRISIS	73
VI. BEFORE THE COURT	91
VII. STILL USEFUL	115
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	126

Illustrations

Henry Preserved Smith	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Rev. Henry Smith, of London, according to family tradition uncle of the Rev. Henry Smith, of Wethersfield, Conn.	4
Lane Theological Seminary	40
Henry Preserved Smith in 1924 as librarian of the Union Theological Seminary	120

Introduction

I. Introduction

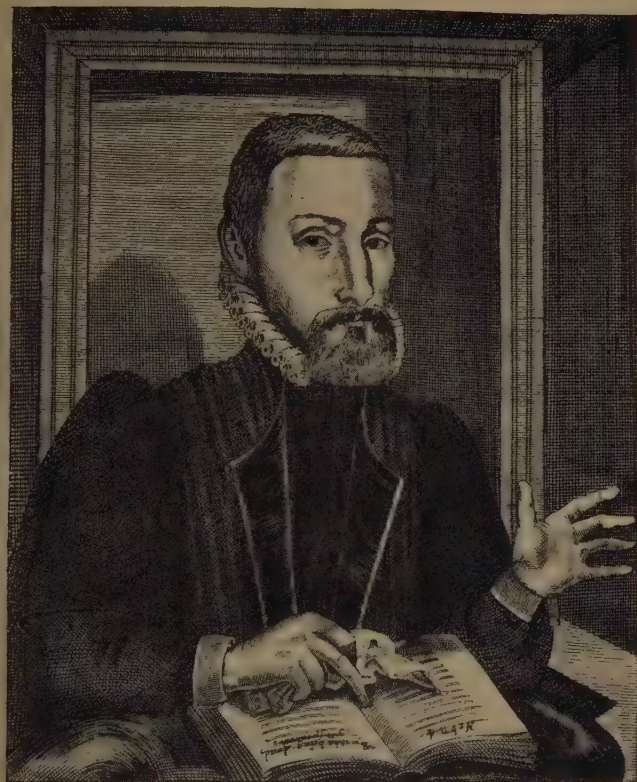
IN September, 1874, I began to teach at Lane Seminary. Fifty years later my colleagues at Union, where I then was, asked me to relate some of my experiences. I was tempted to say, like the knife-grinder: "Story have I none." The life of a teacher has little that is adventurous about it. Still it is said that the life of any human being has something of interest for other human beings, and if I could not tell of hairbreadth 'scapes, I might reveal in my ordinary experiences something that was worth while. I therefore prepared a paper and read it to my friends, who expressed sincere interest in it, and suggested that if put into print it would be instructive to a larger circle. Somewhat expanded and supplemented, it is reproduced in this little volume.

One thing that weighs with me is that

my experience is probably typical. Many men of my generation have gone through similar changes of view. In the present debate between the two parties known as Fundamentalist and Modernist my narrative may give a little light. If our conservative friends will read my story with an open mind, they may discover that change of view on points of theology is not due simply to depraved human nature or the machinations of Satan. It may not be true in every case that to understand all is to pardon all, but to understand all may soften the asperity of controversy.

As this is practically an autobiography, I make no apology for the frequent appearance of the pronoun of the first person.

Let me begin with a confession that may prejudice some readers. It is that I am descended from Puritan ancestors on both sides of the house. On the Smith side we trace the direct line from the Reverend Henry Smith, a graduate of the University of Cambridge, who came to New England



The lively Portrature of the Reverend, Faithfull and worthy
Minister of Jesus Christ M^r. Henry Smith borne at
Withcok in Leiceſterſhire . ☠

Are to be ſold by John Saywall at the Grey-hound in Little Britain . Crofts Sculp^r

Reverend Henry Smith (1550?-1591) of London, according to family tradition, uncle of the Reverend Henry Smith of Wethersfield, Connecticut

in 1637, and became the first settled pastor of the church at Wethersfield, Connecticut. About him there are some family traditions which, unfortunately, I am not able to verify. One is that he was a nephew of the "silver-tongued" lecturer of Saint Clement Danes without Temple Bar, who also was a Henry Smith. This Henry, as the *Dictionary of National Biography* shows, was a prolific writer. Elizabethan London packed the aisles of his church, though his conscience forbade him to sign the Thirty-nine Articles; wherefore he had to remain merely a lecturer. I have endeavored to get genealogical authority as to our connection with him without success. The other tradition is that our Henry Smith had a son born on the voyage from England, and that he named the child Preserved, because the ship came through a great storm in safety. This story is proved to be a family legend, because the record shows that though Henry Smith had a son Peregrine, he had none named Preserved. That name appears two generations later, and if given to commemorate any

event it was probably preservation from Indians or wolves. For Samuel Smith, son of Henry, moved up the Connecticut valley, first to Northampton and then to Hadley, while that region was still a wilderness.

The family, under the pioneer impulse, moved again to Ashfield at the settlement of that town. Here they showed the independence characteristic of the Puritans, an attribute with which they are not always credited. It is a mistake to suppose all New Englanders to have been believers in the high Calvinism ascribed to Jonathan Edwards and Samuel Hopkins. Edwards himself testifies that his neighbors in the ministry were Arminians, and John Adams declared that what began to be called Unitarianism in his days had always been preached but had been known as Arminianism. What the Smiths of Ashfield accepted as doctrine we do not know. But we have the record that they found no vital godliness in the church at Ashfield, and began to hold meetings in each other's houses. And hearing of some called Baptists in the

eastern part of the State, they got into communication with them. The result of the affiliation with the Baptists was a dispute with the town authorities, for the minister was installed by the town, and supported by a tax. The Smiths refused to pay the tax and appealed to the General Court to be relieved from it. Being refused, they carried their appeal to the Parliament of Great Britain (this was before the Revolution, of course), and here were successful. Chileab Smith, the head of the family, was ordained to the Baptist ministry when eighty years of age.

There was a Preserved in each generation, but not all were my progenitors. Chileab had a son, Ebenezer, who, like his father, was a Baptist minister; and his son, my great-grandfather, bore the name. He, after serving in the Revolutionary army, studied in Brown University, then called Rhode Island College, where he graduated in 1786. The following year he was "approbated" by the Hampshire Congregational Association and installed over

the church at Rowe, Massachusetts. It was some years later, when the Unitarian controversy became acute, that the neighboring ministers were alarmed for purity of doctrine, and organized an association on the basis of a strictly Calvinistic creed, inviting him to join. He declined, saying that he had been duly ordained and installed and did not see the way clear to take additional dogmatic pledges. He was therefore left to seek fellowship with the few Unitarian ministers in western Massachusetts. He had no love for the name Unitarian, and called himself simply a Christian minister; but this did not shield him against a pamphlet entitled *Preserved Smith Damned*. His son, another Preserved, graduated at Brown University, and became pastor of the church of Warwick in Massachusetts. My father, who also bore the name Preserved, broke the succession of ministers and went into business.

So much for the Smiths. Of my mother's family we know less. But she was a descendant of the Reverend John Mayo, first

pastor of the Second Church of Boston. He was in Boston as early as 1650, but left no record of his life. As further evidence of my Puritan blood I may add that Cotton Mather says that one of our Smith family, a deacon who lived in Hadley, was “in the Winter of the Year 1684, murdered with a hideous *Witchcraft*, that fill’d all those Parts of *New England* with *Astonishment*.”

In Good Standing

II. *In Good Standing*

THE first question that the reader is likely to ask is: What qualifications had you that justified you in undertaking to teach young men? And since my work was in a theological seminary, the question naturally divides itself into two: one as to intellectual qualifications, the other as to religious fitness. In both respects I must confess that the outfit was somewhat meagre. I graduated at the Dayton (Ohio) high school in 1864, had two years at Marietta College, and three at Amherst, where I graduated in 1869. In all three schools I took respectable rank, but hardly more than that. At Amherst I was in the first third of the class, the fraction that was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. But I cannot boast of any keen interest in my studies. You remember that when *The Education of Henry Adams* was published, Doctor

Crothers entitled his review of the book *Education in Pursuit of Henry Adams*. He thus gave the key-note of the book, which is the conviction of the author that, with all his advantages (and they were unusual), he had never really become educated. Such a reaction is perhaps comprehensible in a mind keenly aware of its own deficiencies and severely critical of ordinary educational methods. I was never tempted to take such a position, although looking back at my schooling I find some things to criticise. The chief of these is the lack of co-ordination between the different institutions. To illustrate: The Dayton high school aspired to be a college. It taught Greek and Latin after a fashion, and gave a good deal of attention to mathematics. Then it added physics (natural philosophy was the term used), chemistry, physiology, and botany. The principal even gave us some psychology; that is, he read out of a textbook, and had us write down sections at his dictation. The consequence was duplication, which, to say the least, did not con-

duce to habits of study. I read Homer in the high school and also at Marietta. The recollection of what I had studied in one institution was sufficient to carry me through without much labor in the other. Trigonometry at Dayton was exactly what we had at Amherst, the same text-book being used. The same is true of chemistry and botany, and while in physics and physiology the text-books were not the same, the courses were not much more advanced. In all these cases the instruction was by text-books, lessons being assigned, learned, and recited. In chemistry and physics laboratory methods were used to a certain extent by the instructor, who conducted experiments in the presence of the class. In my senior year, indeed, we were allowed to do a little qualitative analysis in chemistry. Otherwise the students had no such opportunity, and this one was restricted to a few members of the class. What I am now pointing out is that this duplication discouraged habits of study. Most of us were satisfied if we got the required lessons, and

while there was no dissipation among the students, there was more or less idleness. As for myself, it did not occur to me to ask whether I was getting an education. I assumed that I was getting what wiser men knew to be an education, and this attitude was the general one.

Intellectually, therefore, I was poorly prepared for the theological seminary, but I was perhaps as well prepared as others who entered the institution at the same time. Before going into that, however, let us look at the other factor, that of religion. Here I may say what I have implied about my intellectual training—I took my religion as it came to me without violent reactions of any kind. My parents were New England people, and on moving to Ohio, finding no Congregational church, they naturally joined the New School Presbyterians, who were in fact affiliated with the New England churches. The New School Presbyterians, I need hardly explain, were Calvinists, though they softened some of the harsher features of the system embodied

in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. They did not venture to make any changes in these historic documents, but explained their statements in a less rigorous sense, affirming a general instead of a limited atonement, and making man's inability to do right a moral rather than a natural one.

In this church I was brought up, attended its services and its Sunday-school. When I was sixteen years old our pastor asked the young people of his congregation to come together, and laid before them the duty of confessing Christ. About thirty of us responded and were received into church membership. This was without excitement of any kind. We had had Christian training in the Sunday-school as well as in our homes, and, while conscious that we were sinners, none of us had acute pangs of remorse, or, on the other hand, the raptures which some feel in making the great decision. Such was my own experience, and, as we were going through the Civil War, it seemed to me that my Christian profession was like the patriotic young man's enlist-

ment in the army—motivated by a desire to do one's duty to his country, but a quiet resolution without flourish of any kind.

The religious influence of the home was continued in college. Marietta, to which I first went, was the college of the combined New School and Congregational churches. Ohio was and is full of colleges, each Christian denomination having its own. Here I am reminded of an address of President Meiklejohn in which he took pains to show that Amherst and other New England colleges were not founded for the training of ministers. If this means that they were not primarily theological seminaries, the statement is undoubtedly correct. The student of theology was expected to get his technical training from an older minister. The colleges were founded to give an adequate intellectual equipment in history and literature preparatory to the professional training for the three learned callings—ministry, law, and medicine. At the same time it must be remembered that the founders believed that those who entered

these professions should be religious men, grounded in the correct intellectual faith, which, of course, meant the creed of the particular denomination. In most of these institutions, therefore, a text-book on Christian Evidences found a place in the curriculum, and Butler's *Analogy*, that great arsenal of arguments against the Deists, was retained in some colleges down to quite recent times. If believing parents wished their sons to have correct principles, they sent them to a Christian college. They thus came under the influence of pious teachers, the presidents and many of the professors being clergymen. The interest in theological questions is indicated by the fact that in my time the senior class at Amherst requested Professor Seelye to devote one morning hour each week to an exposition of the questions of the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster divines. Moreover, it was hoped that a revival of religion would be experienced at least once during the four-year course of each college class. At Marietta we had marked religious

interest during my stay there. The thrill I experienced at seeing my friends come out on the Lord's side was much like what I felt when I knew of a friend who had decided to enlist in the Union army. At Amherst there had been a revival the year before I entered, and the religious tone of the college was thereby heightened.

For myself, I can say that I sympathized with the atmosphere I found both at Marietta and at Amherst. I was faithful in attendance at all the religious services and did not find them burdensome, took part also in the class prayer-meetings, and in general made my faith manifest. There was, however, nothing spectacular or even distinctly emotional in my conduct.

In my senior year I had to decide on my life-work. Mr. Brownell has somewhere said that the American student usually has to face the question whether he ought not to enter the ministry. In such colleges as Amherst, this was the case. I do not remember that pressure was brought to bear upon us by the professors. But we students

discussed the question of duty among ourselves, with a sincere desire to do some good in the world. For my own part, weighing the question, it seemed to me that with the advantages I had had my course was clear. To teach men their duty, to enlighten them as to the ways of God, to sensitize the conscience and induce a decision for a truly Christian life seemed a worthy end of effort. Of course my idea of the ministry was formed on what I had observed of the pastor's duties. Attempting to make a just estimate of my own abilities and attainments, it did not seem extravagant to conclude that I could qualify for such service. There was no thought of making a sacrifice, but a calm endeavor to do the best in my power. This was also the temper of my classmates, so far as I can judge. Out of the fifty-six who graduated at Amherst in 1869, twenty studied theology.

Lane Seminary was the theological school of the New School Presbyterians, and I naturally went thither. During the three years' course twenty-four men were con-

nected with the class, but some went for part of their course to other institutions, so that we graduated sixteen in number. Our ideal was the same that I had held before myself; we wanted to be preachers and pastors of churches already in existence, or to found similar churches in the home or foreign field. The immediate exigency was to get enough Greek, Hebrew, church history, and theology to enable us to pass the examinations required by our presbyteries. To this end we got the lessons assigned us, but had little ambition to explore fields of knowledge which lay outside of the bounds fixed by the churches (Presbyterian or Congregational) to which we belonged. Preaching was to be our main work, and one object of our study was to get subjects for our discourses. All of us had had some training in English composition, had been members of debating or literary societies, and had taken part in prayer-meetings. It was natural for us to have confidence in our ability to put the material in shape if the subjects were furnished us.

According to Protestant tradition the minister is a preacher of the Word; that is, he is to expound the Scriptures, making plain what we are to believe concerning God, and what duties God requires of man. The prime material, therefore, is furnished by the study of the Bible. But here comes in a limitation. The preaching must be according to the analogy of faith, that is, it must confirm the system of doctrine held by the denomination to which the preacher belongs. It is on this theory that the theological seminary organized its curriculum. We at Lane had four professors. Professor L. J. Evans had the Biblical department, both Old Testament and New; Doctor E. D. Morris taught church history, Doctor H. A. Nelson the systematic theology, and Doctor Henry Smith the homiletics. All these instructors had been pastors, Doctors Morris and Nelson for long periods of time. This meant that they were not specialists in the sense in which we should use the word today. They took the pastoral point of view, and expected to train their pupils to do the

work in which they themselves had had abundant experience and good success. How far they were from understanding movements then coming into view, such as evolution and the higher criticism, may be illustrated by one sentence that lingers in my memory. Professor Nelson began his course in theology by discussing the inspiration of Scripture, and the conclusion to which he came was in these words: "The Scriptures being the Word of God, whatever the Bible affirms must be true." The theology which he gave us was in fact what he had learned at Auburn, where he graduated in 1846. It had served him in good stead through a long and important pastorate, and he did not see why it was not equally good for us of another generation. The most of his pupils accepted his point of view, though occasionally one or another would ask a question that showed acquaintance with current discussion.

Two events which occurred during my seminary course may be noticed as of some possible interest for the reader. One was

the reunion of the New School and Old School churches. The two branches had been separated for thirty years. The reason they now came together was that the controversies thought to be important in the earlier time had lost their force. It is, in fact, difficult at the present day to realize how questions concerning mediate or immediate imputation, concerning natural or moral inability, or concerning the extent of the atonement could have aroused such heat as led to the excising of a considerable section of the church. The discussion having become antiquated, and the Old School branch having lost some of its most rigidly orthodox members by the secession of the Southern presbyteries, it was felt that the time had come for the reunion, and this was accomplished in my junior year at Lane. The event was of especial significance for Lane because Cincinnati had been a battle-ground of the two parties in Lyman Beecher's time. It was duly celebrated by us, and steps were at once taken to gain the confidence of the former Old

School men. They were given representation on the Board of Trustees, and a new professorship was founded in their interest. The Biblical work was now divided and the New Testament part was given to Doctor T. E. Thomas, the well-known pastor of an Old School church. It was hoped that the Old School men would respond by endowing the new chair. The result, however, was disappointing both in this respect and in regard to gaining the confidence of the Old School churches, which had always been in a majority in southern Ohio, southern Indiana, and Kentucky. Theological prejudice is hard to kill, and so long as former New School men held the principal chairs in the seminary the institution was regarded with suspicion. However, those who were in the seminary at the time I speak of were not much affected.

The other event to which I have alluded was a series of meetings held by E. P. Hammond, a revivalist well known at that time. The methods he used were probably the same as those used by other special preach-

ers of his type. First he insisted that the churches in a given area should unite in the effort. His opening sermon would be devoted to the shortcomings of church members, pointing out how they had been careless of the salvation of their neighbors. Here and now (he would say) is an opportunity to do good: "Speak to some one about his eternal interest; at least you can invite him to these meetings." Having thus secured the presence of the unconverted, he would point out what the law of God demanded of them. For their guilt, however, there was a remedy prepared by God Himself in the atonement of Christ, and the preacher would beseech his hearers not to add to their sins by ingratitude to the Saviour, who had done so much for them. Especially effective for young people was the vivid description of the suffering of Jesus on the cross, the pain and the shame of it all. The appeal to do something for Him who had done so much for them would follow, and opportunity would be given for any who were willing to accept the Saviour then and there to

show it by rising, by coming forward, or by remaining for personal conversation after the main meeting was dismissed. This opportunity to show one's colors, if I may use the expression, was the secret of what success was had. The people reached were those who had had Christian instruction, and were conscious that they had been delaying a step that they ought to take. The opportunity to do something that would commit them, even if it were so simple a matter as to rise and ask for prayers, was just what they needed.

We theological students were present at the meetings, and attempted to do something for the cause by speaking to persons who were present but who for some reason held back from the decisive step. One incident stands out in my memory. After one of the meetings I noticed a young woman who had a concern, as our Quaker friends would say, and on approaching her I found that she could not make up her mind to give up dancing, which was what her church would require. I simply said: "I would

not let it stand between me and my Saviour." Then after a word of prayer I left her. I did not see her again, but one of our men reported a few days later that he found a young lady happy in her new choice, and, on asking her if she was Mr. Hammond's convert, received the reply that she was Mr. Smith's convert. I have no doubt that my little word about not letting anything stand between me and my Saviour was the word she needed. The advantage of special revival services is that many persons who are letting comparatively trivial things keep them from doing what they know to be their duty are brought to see the insignificant value of these things when brought into comparison with spiritual realities.

The older evangelists did not hesitate to use the threat of hell-fire as their motive—Jonathan Edwards is the classical example; and Finney, once so successful in special efforts, followed in his footsteps. A lady who as a girl was in a school at College Hill, near Cincinnati, told me that

an appointment was made for the great preacher to visit the school. Of course the girls were keyed up to a high pitch of expectation. When the expected guest came he began his sermon with the question: "Do you want to go to hell?" The effect can be imagined. As I recall it, Hammond did not make so crude an appeal. He appealed to the conscience, emphasized the Law of God and the sufferings of Christ, and doubtless let his hearers see that he had no doubt as to the ultimate fate of those who should obstinately refuse the proffered salvation. But he let them feel it and did not paint in detail the sufferings of the lost.

As to the people reached by the meetings, I have already intimated that they were for the most part those who had had Christian training in Sunday-school, the church, or the family. The great unchurched mass was not sensibly affected, and while some effort was made to approach them, no appreciable result was reported. The meetings, however, had an influence beyond the

bounds of Cincinnati. Some of the neighboring towns were stirred to make a special effort for themselves. Dayton, my home, was one of these, and the pastors there were encouraged by an unusual success. The church of which I was a member received about a hundred accessions, the most of them young people, but some heads of families were moved by the "convenient season," for which they had been waiting. As for us theological students, I can only say that the meetings gave us some instruction in practical theology. The psychology of religion was as yet an unknown science, but our observations might have led to some understanding of it had we had a guide; but none was forthcoming. One of our men, the one with the smallest mental equipment of our number, got a cl w to his life-work. He did not see why he could not do what Mr. Hammond (who had neither Greek nor Hebrew) was doing. He therefore entered on the career of an evangelist, and I believe had considerable success.

I was licensed to preach by the presbytery of Dayton in the spring of 1871, and that summer I preached to two small churches in northern Ohio. The people were extraordinarily kind, and wanted me to promise to come back to them as their pastor after completing my theological course. I did not think it wise to bind either myself or them, but I mention the matter here to show that nothing in my experience thus far gave me reason to think that I had made a mistake in choosing my profession.

Returning to Lane, I completed my course, graduating in 1872. Some of the seminaries were establishing fellowships to enable their more promising graduates to study abroad. Lane had no such arrangement, but my father generously offered me the same privilege. I therefore spent the winter semester of 1872-73 in Berlin. The following spring I made the trip to Palestine, and after a summer in Italy and Switzerland returned for a second winter semester to Berlin. I had no idea of spe-

cializing in any particular line of inquiry, but only wanted to complete my education in all branches, still expecting to become a pastor. Therefore I heard Dorner on dogmatics, Kleinert on Isaiah and the Psalms, and Semisch on church history. I cannot say that I profited as much as I might have done. My chief gain was acquisition of the German language and some insight into German theological thought of the conservative kind (notice), for I still had the dread of rationalism with which Presbyterian theological students were inoculated.

Returning home in the summer of 1874, and expecting to take any church that would accept my services, I was surprised by an invitation to teach a year at Lane. The situation was this: Doctor Nelson had come to the conclusion that he was better fitted for the pastorate than for the professorship, and had therefore resigned his chair to accept a call to a church. Thereupon Doctor Morris had been transferred to the chair of systematic theology, and the trustees had not yet found a man for

church history. The proposition was that I should teach the junior class, using a textbook, while Doctor Morris would give the upper classes his lectures on the history of doctrine. This opened a door to me, and I entered it, perhaps following the line of least resistance. The appointment was for one year only, and during that year I might look for other work. Neither in this case nor in any other did I ever solicit work. As was expected, a professor of church history was found during the year, and Doctor Zephaniah Humphrey entered on his work the next autumn.

In the meantime a new situation had developed. Doctor Thomas died early in 1875, and this made a vacancy in the department of exegesis. Doctor Evans, who had taught both Old Testament and New for some years, elected to take the vacant chair, and the question came: What shall be done for the Hebrew? I was then asked whether I would try the Hebrew, with the intimation that, if I made good, the position would be made permanent. I agreed,

only stipulating that, after the year's experiment, I could have a year abroad for better preparation. This was agreed to and I taught the junior class during the year 1875-76.

In the summer of 1875 I was ordained to the ministry by the presbytery of Dayton, on the theory that one who was to instruct theological students should himself be in the sacred office. My examination before presbytery was approved. One or two of the older men regretted that I did not call the sufferings of Christ penal, but they voted for the ordination. My trial sermon before the presbytery was on the text "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and it is perhaps characteristic of ordinary theological method that in preparing the sermon I did not inquire into the phenomena of Scripture itself, but took my material largely from a volume by Lee—a thoroughly dogmatic work.

At this point, therefore, about to enter on what I supposed would be my life-work, I was a Presbyterian minister in good

standing. In fact I could with a good conscience call myself a conservative. I was willing to give due weight to every argument in favor of the tradition of the church. That tradition, as I have intimated, was the New School tradition, which softened down some of the more rigid doctrines of the older Calvinism; but so far as the affirmations of the Confession concerning Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith and morals were concerned, New School and Old School were agreed. In going abroad for my second period of study, I hoped to prepare myself the better to defend the Bible from its objectors.

Facing the Facts

III. Facing the Facts

MY first year's teaching of Hebrew passed without incident. Hebrew was never a popular study, but I succeeded in interesting my students, and I became more keenly aware of my need of fuller knowledge. To prepare myself I spent the next year at Leipzig. The reason I chose that university was that its theological faculty had the reputation of orthodoxy. Franz Delitzsch, who had the chair of Hebrew, was the leading conservative scholar on that subject in Germany. During the year I heard him on Old Testament theology and on Messianic prophecy. I also heard Luthardt, another representative of conservative Lutheran theology, on theological encyclopædia, and at the same time picked up enough Arabic and Syriac for comparative purposes. Although Delitzsch was conservative, his historical sense was leading him to make some

slight concessions to the newer criticism. But these were not enough to disturb his students. Among these were Samuel Ives Curtiss, Hinckley G. Mitchell, and Caspar René Gregory. All of them were brought up in the tradition of the churches and were conservative in their preferences, but all were compelled to modify their views by the facts of Scripture brought out through their study.

Returning to Lane, I undertook the Old Testament work. The immediate exigency did not require much discussion of critical questions. Our students were not much affected by rationalism, and their chief concern was to get enough Hebrew to enable them to pass the examinations for licensure and ordination before their presbyteries. This I tried to give them and in addition enough to enable them to read the commentaries intelligently. The ordinary commentaries to be sure left much to be desired. They were filled with pious platitudes, they passed in silence over difficulties, or else they read into the Biblical text what was



Lane Theological Seminary

not there. I printed a little pamphlet on Introduction, describing the work of the Massoretic editors, and naming the chief ancient versions, but not going into critical questions. In one respect I was relieved of the necessity of discussing such questions. Professor Humphrey followed what was once good Protestant tradition, and began his church history with the Old Testament period. I did not wish to intrude on his province, and while I took the students through the English Old Testament in cursory fashion, my aim was to give them an idea of the contents of the book rather than to raise troublesome questions.

Some of my young friends will say that this is a confession of cowardice. But they must visualize the situation. I was the youngest member of the faculty. It would have been unbecoming in me to set up my opinion against that of my seniors, even if my own opinion had been fully formed. But I was only gradually coming to a sense of the real nature of the Bible. My colleagues, however strenuous they might be

in defending their New School views against Old School pressure, were anxious to prove their loyalty to the Westminster Confession. This was in their view the more necessary because the seminary was situated in an Old School constituency. Southern Ohio, southern Indiana, and Kentucky were known to be largely occupied by Old School churches. By the reunion, Lane, instead of being the only seminary of its denomination west of the Alleghanies, was one of four competing for Presbyterian support. Kentucky had its own school of theology at Danville; there was the Western at Pittsburgh, and McCormick at Chicago. Our men thought our wisest policy would be to gain the confidence, above all not to shake the confidence, of our environment. It was not my place to be a disturber of the peace. So, at least, I reasoned.

No criticism was directed at my teaching, and the representatives of the presbyteries whom we invited to our annual examinations spoke of the Hebrew work with approval. What criticism there was seemed

to be directed at Doctor Morris. The chair of dogmatics was of course regarded as the most important one, and it was the one at which the conservatives, if inclined to find fault, would direct their shafts. He as a New School man was strenuous in defending his right to interpret the confession in the New School manner. But some of the trustees who had come in from the Old School branch wanted the central teaching of the seminary to be such as they could approve without reserve. Some of our students were mature men who had already formed their doctrinal system, and were disturbed at not hearing the formulas with which they were familiar—shibboleths were still a power. Perhaps I protest too much; all I am trying to show is that, although we had our troubles, none of them arose on account of the Biblical department. Evidence of my soundness is perhaps indicated by the fact that after I had been teaching some years Doctor Morris asked me whether I would not undertake the dogmatics when he should retire. Of course I replied that

I had prepared myself for the Old Testament department, and did not think I could successfully devote myself to another subject.

As an exegete my task was well defined for me by the man who said: The meaning of the Bible is the Bible. An ancient text was in my hands. The question was: What did the author mean? And the only way to answer that question was to use the approved methods of linguistic study—the industrious use of grammar, lexicon, and concordance. Whether the result would be to confirm the doctrine of our church was not with me the main question. No doubt, as the catechism says, the Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duties God requires of man. But there is much else in the Bible than this principal teaching, and the exegete must consider the whole volume. The amount of material which is of direct interest to the dogmatician is made manifest by the volumes of *Dicta Probantia* or proof-texts published by some authors. The professed expositor of Scripture cannot

confine his attention to these passages, and if he is faithful to his task he cannot make it his *first* object to confirm the doctrines held and taught by his church.

The translator of an ancient document must assume that the writer whom he studies had at least common sense, and could say what he meant. Should one of his sentences be unintelligible, the natural hypothesis is that it has been corrupted in transmission. The copyists through whose hands the Hebrew Bible came were not infallible. Like the typesetters of to-day, they might be careless or stupid, not always stopping to reflect on the meaning of their copy. At the very outset therefore the exegete is compelled to consider the soundness of the text with which he deals. The Confession of Faith, to be sure, affirms that the original Hebrew and Greek have by God's singular care and providence been kept pure in all ages. But the facts show that this is not true of every detail. For example, the Hebrew of I Sam. 13:1 reads: "Saul was one year old when he began to

reign and he reigned two years over Israel." The language is perfectly plain and means exactly what I have given. But the absurdity of the statement is too evident to require comment. The only way to explain the presence of the sentence in the text is to suppose that something has fallen out. Moffatt is therefore right in giving us: "Saul was . . . years old when he began to reign, and he reigned . . . years over Israel."

The conscientious student soon discovers that this is not an isolated case. In various passages where the Hebrew is obscure he is obliged to consider the question whether the text is sound. Light must be sought from parallel passages and from the ancient versions. Among these the Greek, which is the oldest, evidently had as its original a form of the Hebrew differing in many details from the volume in our hands. Sober judgment is needed to decide between the various readings, but the student must not assume that in every case the received text is correct. As to parallel passages, one may compare David's Psalm in II Sam. 22

with the copy in the Psalter (Psalm 18). The differences in some cases show at least scribal errors. A comparison of the books of Chronicles with the parallel passages in the earlier historical books leads to the same conclusion. The average reader comforts himself with the assertion that the most corrupt copy of the most inadequate version still preserves the essentials of the faith, and this we may admit. But how far this falls short of the dogmatic demand for an inerrant Bible must be evident.

The exegete must recognize the facts which compel criticism of the text; but how disturbing these facts may be to one who holds that the Bible being the Word of God, everything that it says must be true, was made evident to me at the General Assembly of 1881, of which I was a member. That was the year, it will be remembered, in which the Revised New Testament was published. Copies were on sale at the Assembly and were eagerly scrutinized. One of the prominent members, a man who had a long and successful pastorate over a large church, referred to the revision in

these words: "Revision! I am sick of the word. It has put the stamp of doubt on some of the most precious passages of the Word of God." The merest tyro in New Testament study could see how far such a declaration showed the author to be from a true estimate of New Testament scholarship. The passages on which the revisers put the stamp of doubt were passages which, in their judgment, were no part of the original autographs of Scripture, and to this extent had no right to be called the Word of God. What the declaration showed was that the average reader, and indeed the average preacher, accepted the Authorized Version as the inerrant Word.

That textual criticism is disturbing to one who thus reads his Bible needs no demonstration. Indeed, it came to view when Cappellus proved that the vowel-points were not part of the original Hebrew text. Buxtorf in his reply admitted what would happen to the doctrine of verbal inspiration if consonants only were inspired. When Walton published, in 1657, his great Poly-

glot, giving the ancient versions a place alongside of the Hebrew, and also supplementing the work by a list of various readings, he called forth a bitter attack from John Owen, the defender of Presbyterian orthodoxy. Owen deprecated the publication of facts which might militate against the authority of Scripture. Walton's reply entitled *The Considerator Considered* is still worth reading.

As for myself, the facts forced me to admit the necessity of textual criticism, but the emendations which I admitted to the Hebrew text seemed to be of minor importance. The compelling force of the facts, however, was admitted about the time I have in mind by the most conservative scholars. *The Presbyterian Review* was founded in 1880. It was the property of the seminaries of the church, and as both Old and New School parties were represented, it was natural to suppose that it would be the organ of discussion for varying views. Such, at any rate, was the idea of Doctor Briggs, one of the managing edi-

tors. Doctor Archibald Alexander Hodge, the other editor, may have had a more distinctly apologetic purpose. However that may be, one of the earliest papers published was on inspiration, written jointly by Doctor Hodge and Doctor B. B. Warfield, then of the Western Seminary. Professedly it was an argument for verbal inspiration and consequent inerrancy of the Scriptures. But it made one significant concession; it predicated this inerrancy of the text which resulted after the original had been recovered by textual criticism. It did not seem to occur to the writers that they were going contrary to the Confession, which, as we have seen, affirmed the purity of the copies in our hands, or, on the other hand, that they were postponing to an indefinite future a reliable Bible. All that now concerns us is to note that even the most conservative scholars were compelled by the facts to admit the necessity of criticism of the text. The inquiring mind might well ask whether the facts alleged by the higher criticism are not equally compelling.

Space and Time

IV. *Space and Time*

ALTHOUGH a conservative in temperament, I was aware that the era was a time of intellectual ferment. For this reason I was heartily in favor of the new *Review*. The minister's education is not completed when he gets his diploma; we might say that it is only begun. What the average pastor needs, according to my observation, is to be kept acquainted with the progress of thought, and the excellent book notices of the *Review* as well as the leading articles would keep him thus in touch with his own day. Darwin's *Origin of Species* had been published before I entered college, and was under discussion during my college course. While I gave no special attention to biology, one thing stuck in my memory. My fondness for botany gave me some familiarity with the works of Asa Gray, then the leading authority on that subject in this coun-

try. In one of his essays he said: "Vain is the attempt to distinguish between species and varieties." This was a distinct concession to Darwin. The older theory had been that a species was a fixed entity, and that there was no passing from one species to another. That there might be some variations of minor importance in the individuals of the same species was all that was allowed. But if Gray was right, the variations might form a series leading from one species to another. This was, to be sure, in the plant world. But if true there, no reason could be alleged why it might not be true of animals also, which was exactly Darwin's contention. However, with me the question was not acute. In my exegesis I had occasion to notice the apparent conflict between Genesis and geology. Temporarily the minds of inquirers were quieted by the theory of Professor J. D. Dana, who held that the succession of acts narrated in the Mosaic account was the same that the geologists discovered in the rocks. The meaning of the word *day* was hotly de-

bated, but no explanation was given of the outstanding fact that the author of Genesis had allowed countless numbers of readers to suppose that the universe came into existence in a week of six literal days. I suppose the whole harmonistic theory of Professor Dana is now antiquated.

Professor (later President) Seelye, of Amherst, in giving a lecture on social conditions, said in substance: "I know of no way of judging where we are except to consider the way over which we have come." His meaning was, of course, that a knowledge of history is necessary to him who would understand his own time. The statement is to us a truism, and in a sense has always been recognized by educators. The inclusion of church history in the theological curriculum is evidence enough, and even the most conservative scholars believed that the history of Israel is important because it was the preparation for Christianity. The Old Testament scholar therefore must form some opinion concerning what actually took place in Pales-

tine before the coming of Christ. When I began to teach, this necessity was emphasized by the new discoveries in the field of Assyriology. By the decipherment of the inscriptions Israel's history and Israel's literature were brought out of the isolation in which Jewish tradition had placed them and a host of new questions were raised.

It need hardly be pointed out that the historian's interest here was different from that of the theologian. The emphasis of the theologian on the system of doctrine, which was to him the most important thing in the world, closed his eyes to the development which the historian was obliged to trace. Since the true doctrine was what had been held "always, everywhere, and by all" the elect, it was even supposed that the dogmatic system must have been revealed to Abraham if not to Adam. Modern dogmatics is more modest and begins to make some concessions to what it calls the progress of doctrine either in the Old Testament or in the New.

History undertakes to tell us what actu-

ally took place in the earlier time. If the ancient monument or document is rightly interpreted, it gives us a high degree of certainty. We are as sure that Alexander the Great lived as we are of the existence of our own contemporaries. But certain conditions must be fulfilled before we can attain this certainty. The past, like the present, is subject to the laws of space and time. Really to know a thing, whether near or remote, we must date and locate it. Geography and chronology are therefore the servants of historical science. Bishop Colenso's startling criticism of the Pentateuch was based on the consideration that three million people could not have existed for forty years in the desert of Sinai. It seems to follow as a matter of course that the documents on which our history is based must themselves be dated before they can be used for our purpose. Here comes in the study which is called, rather unfortunately, the higher criticism. It is the preliminary to all reconstruction of the past.

Now, in attempting to date an ancient document we are obliged to take cognizance of the fact that many books or fragments were published anonymously or even under pseudonyms. The carelessness of many ancient writers about attaching their names to their productions is something we of this day find it hard to understand. When we seek certainty we want to know the name of our informant. Hence, the attempt to assign the Old Testament books to men whose names are known to us. One theologian of repute affirmed (when the higher criticism was under discussion) that the received opinion is that the books of the Old Testament were written by men whose names are known to us—Joshua by Joshua, Judges and Samuel by Samuel, Kings by Isaiah or Jeremiah, or by the two together, the later one supplementing his predecessor. The lack of foundation for such a statement must be evident to any serious student. We must admit that most of the Old Testament books are without the authors' names. It does not follow that we

cannot date them. An anonymous book betrays its origin by the vocabulary it uses or by allusions that it makes. The future historian of this country who finds the word *mugwump* in one of his sources will be sure of the approximate date of the document. In like manner the Biblical student who reads the exhortation to flee out of Babylon will have a clew to the date of the writer.

One further consideration is in place. The ancient writer rarely had what we call the historical interest. This is pre-eminently true of the Israelite authors. Their purpose was distinctly religious; they would warn or exhort their fellow men, drawing lessons from the past. It stands to reason that this motive must be carefully considered, because it may color the picture which the author draws. At least it may determine the choice he makes of the material to use. Since the religious ideas of one generation may not be those of later times, this also must be taken into account. When the documents have been

dated, they must be arranged in their chronological order. Whatever we may think of evolution, it remains true that one age builds on the foundations laid in earlier times. The endeavor thus to date and arrange the Old Testament material brings to light another fact. Many of the books are evidently composite. The idea of literary property being unknown, each writer felt that he could make what use he pleased of his predecessors. Palpable proof is given by the books of Chronicles, whose author embodied in his work whole sections of the earlier historical books. All this is so self-evident to us of the present day that it seems superfluous to dwell upon it. But the history of exegesis shows how slowly it came into the minds of professed Biblical students. At length, however, it dawned upon the minds of some that a distinction must be made between Biblical and dogmatic theology. The essay of Gabler which first formulated the demand deserves a place among epoch-making works. In my own generation Oehler seems to have been

the first to carry out the suggestion, and his work was translated into English. Although wrong in its theory of the order of the documents, it did at least point out that the two periods of Mosaism and Prophetism should be treated separately.

Attention was emphatically called to Old Testament science by the articles of W. Robertson Smith contributed to the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. When I returned from Leipzig in 1877, these were the subject of investigation by the church authorities in Scotland. The Presbyterian Church in this country was interested because the author was a Presbyterian. Evidence of this is an article by Professor Briggs in the first volume of *The Presbyterian Review*. The article reviews the steps taken by the Free Church of Scotland and concludes with these hopeful words: "Two very important points have been made in the course of this discussion: first, that critical views which do not conflict with the Westminster Confession should be decided by discussion among

competent scholars; and, secondly, that evangelical men should be extremely careful not to make loose and unguarded statements, and give offense and anxiety to their brethren in the church. Professor Smith in the various answers has removed many of the objections to his views that were at first entertained. He has distinctly separated himself from rationalistic schools, and has emphatically declared his adherence to the Westminster doctrine of the inspiration and authority of the Bible." The paragraph concludes with the statement that it is better for all interests concerned that the discussion should take place without heat, and free from the technicalities and complications of ecclesiastical proceedings, by competent scholars on both sides, seeking earnestly and prayerfully the truth.

These sentences show the motive with which Doctor Briggs planned a series of papers by competent scholars to be published in the *Review*, and designed to present both sides of the question. He hoped thus to help the church in this country not

only to be informed on the comparatively new Biblical science, but also to avoid the technicalities and complications of ecclesiastical process. That the hope was too sanguine became evident in the long run, though not immediately. The discussion was sure to arouse interest, but also sure to arouse anxiety on the part of those who thought the theology of the church definitely settled. As I have already related, I was a member of the General Assembly of 1881, and had opportunity to see what the reaction of many influential men was likely to be with reference to new views of any kind. Still, I saw that discussion is of the very essence of theology, and I sympathized with Doctor Briggs and approved his plan.

After the adjournment of the Assembly I went to New York at Doctor Briggs's suggestion to consult with him about the proposed series. The first article, by Doctors Hodge and Warfield, I have [already described. It was followed by Doctor Briggs himself, who discussed the right, duty, and

limits of Biblical criticism. His discussion emphasizes the importance of the subject and expresses the fear that he may fail to satisfy extreme men on both sides. He agrees with Messrs. Hodge and Warfield that any theories of the authorship of any book of either Testament which ascribe to them a purely naturalistic genesis, or dates or authors plainly inconsistent with their own natural claims or with the declarations of other Scriptures, are plainly inconsistent with the doctrine of inspiration taught by the church. Nevertheless—and here is the gist of the argument—he objects to the elaboration of the church doctrine into the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Verbal inspiration, Doctor Briggs concedes, is a more precise and emphatic definition than plenary inspiration, but this very precision and emphasis imperil the doctrine of inspiration itself by bringing it into conflict with a vast array of objections along the whole line of Scripture and history, which objections must be met and overcome in incessant warfare, where both sides may

count on doubtful victories, but where the weak, ignorant, and hesitating stumble and fall into diverse temptations and may make shipwreck of their faith. With abundant learning Doctor Briggs is able to show that many of the best-known divines of the Presbyterian Church refuse to admit (what Doctors Hodge and Warfield asserted) that one proved error invalidates the claim of Scripture to be inspired.

W. Robertson Smith resigned his professorship, and published his lectures in the well-known volume *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*. The next article in the projected series was a review of this book by Professor William Henry Green, of Princeton Seminary. This author was, of course, a stanch defender of tradition, and argued again, as he had before, for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. This was the situation when I was invited to contribute an essay. My conviction was that the readers of the *Review* needed information on the actual state of the inquiry. Wellhausen's *Geschichte Israels*, vol-

ume I (in later editions entitled *Prolegomena*), had just come into my hands, and the notices of it which I had seen indicated that it was a work of the first importance. I suggested that for information of the problems we were discussing a review of this book would be valuable. Doctor Briggs assented and asked me to prepare such a review. This I did, and the article appeared in the *Review* for April, 1882. Preparation of it brought me face to face with the higher criticism in its most convincing form. In a sense the book contained little that was new. The analysis of the Pentateuch had been undertaken by a number of scholars. Even Wellhausen's dating of the documents had been anticipated by Reuss and by Graf. But the force and brilliancy with which all the data were presented in the new book put things in a far stronger light. While not prepared to go the whole length, therefore, I saw that some concessions to the critical method must be made. These I pointed out with studied moderation, and the conclusion of the paper urged that

questions of this kind be treated in the spirit of Gamaliel: "If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to naught, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it."

As to the concessions I made, they were simply the commonplaces of historical criticism, formulated in this way:

1. Differences of style imply difference of author.

2. The historical circumstances in which an author wrote are apt to be reflected with more or less definiteness in his work.

3. The ethical and religious conceptions of his time will also influence his work.

Innocent as these appear, they imply, of course, that the processes of historical inquiry may and indeed must be applied to our sacred books. How widely the *Review* was read I do not know, but it soon became evident that some in the church were disturbed at discovering that the dreaded German rationalism was finding defenders in this country. The Presbyterian newspapers were, with one exception, in the

hands of Old School men and gave voice to dissatisfaction with the *Review*. One of them recommended that no more theological students be sent to Germany. The General Assembly of 1882 passed resolutions solemnly warning all who give instruction in our theological seminaries against inculcating any views or adopting any methods which may tend to unsettle faith in the divine origin, and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures as held in our church or in our Presbyterian system of doctrine, either by depreciating or ignoring the supernatural element in divine revelation, or by exalting human conjecture and speculation above historical and divine facts and truths, or by applying hypotheses of evolution, unverified and unverifiable, to the Word of the living God. I suppose the resolution was aimed primarily at me on account of the Wellhausen article, secondarily at Doctor Briggs because of his conduct of the *Review*. He, however, was a member of the Assembly, and showed that the resolution was not appropriated by

himself, saying that all our professors would vote for it.

The dissatisfaction having voiced itself in the highest court of the church seemed to quiet down. There was a paper read in the Cincinnati Ministers' Association aimed directly at me, which compared the wisdom of the critics to that of the serpent in Eden, and this was published in *The Commercial Gazette*, but nothing more came of it. In the church at large I was still regarded as a very young man and negligible. Possibly, allowance was made for the Wellhausen paper by supposing it to be merely an attempt to inform readers of the then state of opinion in Germany. In addition, the rank and file of the ministry supposed the traditional view so strongly intrenched that attacks upon it could be disregarded. The dogmatic point of view was indicated by Doctor Morris, who asked his class whether a man was a heretic if he asserted that Deuteronomy was not written by Moses. The answer was in the negative. But when he asked whether a man was a heretic for

saying that Deuteronomy was not inspired by God, the class was unanimous in pronouncing the affirmative judgment, which was that of the professor himself.

The suspicions of the conservative party were probably not allayed by subsequent publications in *The Presbyterian Review*, though they naturally took satisfaction in Doctor Patton's paper on the "Dogmatic Aspects of Pentateuchal Criticism," which reaffirmed the traditional view with the author's well-known positiveness of statement. I, on my part, was content in being allowed to carry on my work without interruption. I hope I have made it clear that I was loyal to the church and to the system of doctrine which I had accepted at ordination. My relations with my colleagues and pupils continued to be cordial. I was a faithful member of presbytery, served on some of its important committees, and was elected moderator. One of the older members assured me that the business of the body had never been so expeditiously and satisfactorily done as at

the session over which I presided. My opening sermon the next year had the approval of the most conservative members. I tell these things, not as boasting, but to show that I was not radical or aggressive, and in spite of the Wellhausen paper was not looked upon with suspicion by the great majority.

The Crisis

V. The Crisis

As all men know, the storm broke over Professor Briggs because of his inaugural address, January 20, 1891. The case was peculiar in more ways than one. Doctor Briggs was in reality more loyal to the standards of the church of which he was a member than were many of those who opposed him. In the first place, he was what we may call a High Church Presbyterian, believed in the church as the body of Christ, felt that it was divinely guided in the great crises through which it had passed in early ages, and found spiritual support and nourishment in its ordinances. He had made a special study of the Puritan movement in England, and by the generous gift of Mr. D. H. McAlpin had accumulated a library of the writings of the Westminster divines that is still unequalled in this country. Now known as the McAlpin Col-

lection of Union Theological Seminary, it is probably the most nearly complete body of English seventeenth-century religious literature in the world. Doctor Briggs had familiarized himself with the thought of the leading divines of the period and had convinced himself that American theologians, even of the most orthodox type, had departed from the faith of the fathers. This he set forth at length in a volume entitled *Whither?* published in 1889.

In the preface to this volume he stated his conviction that the pure faith of the Reformation was corrupted by the Protestant scholastics of the century following the Reformation, but that the Westminster divines were in accord with the original Reformation faith, rather than with what had followed. On the other hand, he had discovered that American Presbyterianism had drawn on the later authors, and to this extent had not adhered to the Westminster Confession to which they professed allegiance. This he proposed to show in detail with the practical purpose of guiding the

church in the revision of its standards which was just then proposed. I need not reproduce his criticism here, but only remark that he attacked Princeton Seminary at its most sensitive point. Princeton was the child of the church, founded by the General Assembly before any other of its seminaries came into existence. Adhering to the Old School branch, it had always regarded itself as the defender of the faith once for all delivered to the saints. It was natural for its friends to expect it to be the leading seminary of the reunited church. Doctor Briggs seemed to challenge that claim. Whether in fact anger at his argument was one motive for the agitation against him we can never know, but it was by some regarded as significant that in the Assembly which vetoed his transfer, the moderator and the chairman of the committee on theological seminaries were Princeton men.

While thoroughly loyal to the doctrine of the Westminster symbols, Doctor Briggs was an advocate of the higher criticism of

the Bible. His attitude has been set forth in what has been said concerning his conduct of *The Presbyterian Review*, and was expressed in the address to which we must now give some attention. The occasion was his inauguration into the new chair of Biblical theology, named for the distinguished Edward Robinson. It should be borne in mind that Doctor Briggs had been a member of the Union Seminary faculty for seventeen years. The directors were well satisfied of his qualifications, as were his colleagues in the work of instruction. Whether, in fact, the transfer of a professor from one chair to another in the same faculty was subject to the veto of the Assembly is a question we need not discuss. Union Seminary maintained that the General Assembly's veto power, granted by the seminary in 1870, covered the election and not the transfer of professors. The agitation, however, assumed that it covered both, and it is with this assumption that we are now concerned.

The subject of the inaugural address was

the authority of Holy Scripture, and the address was in the intention of the author a vindication of that authority. But it did not do this in the way which would satisfy the conservative party. In the first place it mentioned the reason and the church as seats or fountains of authority, and adduced Martineau (a Unitarian) as one who had found God through the reason, and Newman (a Roman Catholic) as one who found Him through the church. Then it asserted that the scholastics and ecclesiastics of Protestantism "enveloped the Bible with creed and ecclesiastical decisions and dogmatic systems, and substituted for the authority of God the authority of a Protestant rule of faith." Among the barriers to the divine authority of Scripture the author mentions superstition, verbal inspiration, authenticity, and inerrancy. Under the head of authenticity he places the claim that the books must have been written by prophets and apostles, and he specifically claims that the higher criticism proves that the Pentateuch was not written

by Moses, and that Isaiah did not write half of the book which bears his name. With a little too much enthusiasm he asserts: "We have undermined the breast-works of traditionalism; let us blow them to atoms. We have forced our way through the obstructions; let us remove them from the face of the earth, that no man may be kept from the Bible, but that all may freely enter in and find God enthroned in its very centre."

Enough has been quoted to show why conservatives should take offense. As soon as an outline of the address had appeared in the daily papers, and before the full text was published, agitation began looking toward a veto by the General Assembly. The suggestion was taken up in various quarters, and what seemed a concerted movement to get the presbyteries to overture the Assembly was manifest. When it reached the presbytery of Cincinnati, the professors of Lane Seminary were naturally called upon to take a stand. I have already called attention to the situation in the

institution. Although a New School foundation, it had now a distinct Old School element in its governing board as well as in the faculty. For the chair of practical theology was occupied by Doctor William Henry Roberts, a Princeton man of the most rigid type. Moreover, the Presbyterian church which the professors attended had as its pastor Doctor William McKibbin, a graduate of the Western Seminary, thoroughly imbued with the conservative theology of that institution.

It is perhaps not going too far to say that the conservative group saw in the Briggs incident an opportunity to make Lane Seminary more conservative, or at least to make the professors show their colors. If we should be revealed as Briggs sympathizers, the resulting odium for the seminary would make it difficult for us to hold our chairs. At an adjourned meeting of presbytery, resolutions were offered similar to those passed by other presbyteries, condemning Doctor Briggs and petitioning the Assembly to take action. As it hap-

pened, no professor was present at that meeting, and action was deferred. At the next meeting (March 2) the overture was brought up. It recited the warnings of two Assemblies against rationalistic treatment of the Bible, then called attention to the alarm felt in the church on account of the recent utterances of a professor, and resolved "That while we recognize the importance of full and free critical study of the Scriptures and kindred subjects, provided it be made in a reverential spirit, and with the purpose of vindicating the true nature of the Scriptures as held by our church, we deem such utterances worthy the attention of the General Assembly." The petition which is added—"that the Assembly take such action as shall preserve the peace, purity, and prosperity of the church"—meant of course that the appointment of Doctor Briggs should be vetoed.

At this meeting my colleague, Doctor Llewelyn J. Evans, and myself opposed the resolution. Our grounds were the wholly legitimate ones: that the resolutions virtu-

ally pronounced Doctor Briggs a heretic; that he was responsible to his presbytery, which would doubtless look into his case; and that the Assembly was able to determine its own duty without any prompting from us. We also pointed out that we would be hasty in pronouncing judgment when the full text of the address was not before us. We might have added that the demand of the resolution that critical investigation of the Scriptures should always vindicate the doctrine of our church was exactly what the Roman Catholic Church required, but something from which Protestantism had revolted. Doctor Evans stated that he had gone carefully over the syllabus of the address, and while he did not agree with some things in it, he did not believe that Doctor Briggs held views contrary to the Confession of Faith.

The resolution was carried, but its promoters were angry that it had met with opposition, or perhaps they saw their opportunity to attack the seminary. The very next day *The Commercial Gazette* gave

an account of the meeting, heading it: "A Theological Rumpus; Is Lane Seminary Orthodox? If not, what is it?" The article appeared without signature, but was understood to have come from one of our trustees. It included the statement that this was the worst thing that could happen to Lane Seminary. So dangerous is it to take the part of an accused man! Looking back at the event, I do not see how we could have done anything other and still have remained honest men. The importance of the issue raised was such that Doctor Evans felt it could not be left where it was. Discussing the subject after the meeting, he said to me that at the next stated meeting of presbytery he would ask for time to make a full statement. I suggested that ecclesiastical process would follow. He remarked: "I cannot think it."

His opportunity came earlier. The Presbyterian Ministers' Association, made up of ministers of the city and vicinity, met every Monday afternoon. At the meeting following the session of presbytery it was

suggested that I read a paper on inspiration. I then informed them of Doctor Evans's desire to address presbytery, and suggested that as the time of presbytery was apt to be fully occupied, his best opportunity would be to come before the Ministers' Association. The result was that we were given one appointment each. The decision of Doctor Evans to accept the appointment was a courageous act, for he was suffering from organic heart-disease and any extra exertion might prove fatal. As to his qualifications to speak on the subject, there could be no doubt. He was a thorough scholar, a loyal Presbyterian, a teacher of unusual ability, and a man of the most devout piety. The impression he made was well voiced by a Japanese student. When opportunity was given to his class to ask questions this student inquired: "How did you attain such holiness?"

We were heard for three successive Monday afternoons and our essays were published in a pamphlet under the title *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration*. Doctor Evans

spoke of the New Testament and I of the Old. He gave a sketch of the results of criticism as applied to the Gospels, and pointed out the impossibility of reconciling the phenomena with the doctrine of verbal inspiration. I on my part gave some examples of discrepancies in the Old Testament which also made it difficult to affirm inerrancy, and pointed out the differences of style and thought which made it clear that the Pentateuch was compiled from several sources, and that the Book of Isaiah could not all be the work of the man whose name it bears.

I hope I have made it clear that, holding the views we did, we could not have acted otherwise. The temper in which we were heard is illustrated by one of the papers written in reply. The heading is: "The Down-Grade Theology; the Down-Graders Squarely in Conflict with Christ." We were accused of forcing a conflict on the church, when all that we had done was to exercise our right as presbyters, and then to accept an invitation to explain our position. We claimed to be within our rights

and that we had not denied any of the doctrines to which we had given our assent. The General Assembly was to meet at Detroit in May, and I was elected one of the commissioners from our presbytery, the other two being pronounced conservatives. Whether the thought was to give me rope enough to hang myself, I do not know.

It was evident that the chief thing before the Assembly would be the proposal to veto the transfer of Professor Briggs. According to the Presbyterian system, a minister accused of heresy must be tried by his presbytery as the court of first instance. Steps had already been taken in the presbytery of New York looking to the trial of Doctor Briggs. This made the proposal to disapprove his appointment more difficult, since for the Assembly to give as its reason the unsoundness of the professor's views would prejudice a case in which the presbytery of New York had jurisdiction. For this reason the committee on theological seminaries recommended a veto *simpliciter* without any reasons stated.

I have already called attention to the fact of Princeton's prominence in the Assembly. Doctor Green was moderator, but the real conduct of business was in the hands of Doctor Roberts, the stated clerk. The chairman of the committee was Doctor Patton, a well-known conservative and well versed in ecclesiastical law. His report, as I have said, recommended a veto without reasons, but it was only too evident that the real reason in the minds of the men who voted was belief in Doctor Briggs's unsoundness in the faith. Otherwise the reason might have been stated to be mere prejudice roused by the agitation in the church. The evening after the report was read, there was a meeting of a few friends of Union Seminary to consult on the action to be taken. It was agreed that there was a possibility of securing a postponement of the question to the next Assembly. I was present at the meeting and said simply that I thought there ought to be at least one voice raised in defense of the accused, and that it was my purpose to speak in that sense. I suggested also that

if one speech in plain defense of the accused was made, the proposed compromise would have a better chance. This programme was carried out. When the report was taken up, I made my speech. I affirmed Doctor Briggs's liberty and duty to oppose Bibliolatry if he discovered it, and I asked: "Haven't I heard that in Scotland the New Testament is put at the door of the house to keep the spooks away?" Several voices answered: "No!" But Doctor Ormiston, a highly respected and widely known minister, rose in his place in the centre of the house and declared that he, a Scotchman, had known that to be done. For the rest, I pointed out that ministers were not held to a literal acceptance of all the statements of the Confession, pleaded Doctor Briggs's long service as a professor, and begged for a charitable construction of his utterances.

Of Doctor John Hopkins Worcester's compromise proposition and his advocacy of it, I need not speak. The veto was resolved by four hundred and forty-nine to sixty. The effect of my speech, according to

William Hayes Ward, who reported for *The Independent*, was to exasperate the members against me, so that if they had had any way to get at me they would incontinently have removed me from my chair in the seminary. Yet all I had done was to defend a man whom I thought to be unjustly accused. I trust my present statement shows that conscientiously I could not have done less. The result of the Assembly's action was that the directors of Union Seminary stood by Doctor Briggs, and early in 1892 rescinded the agreement which gave veto power to the Assembly.

Before the Court

VI. Before the Court

DOCTOR EVANS and myself claimed that we were within our rights as Presbyterian ministers. Such a minister at his ordination confesses the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. The reason for this formula is not far to seek. From the first Christian century the church had had to contend with false teachers, and was obliged to put its beliefs in the form of a creed. The importance of sound doctrine was thus emphasized. The Roman Catholic Church, claiming to possess the true doctrine, asserted that this doctrine is contained in the traditions as well as in the Bible. The Protestants, rejecting the traditions, still held to the importance of sound doctrine but based their confessions on the Bible. To secure that its ministers should not teach

error, the Presbyterian Church required them at ordination to recognize this, which was common Protestant belief, and also to accept the Westminster Confession as containing the system of doctrine contained in Scripture. These were the two professions we had made and to which we claimed we were still faithful. Our critics denied this, and affirmed that what we had published was contrary to our profession. The only way in which the matter could be decided was by trial before the courts of the church. The *Book of Discipline* had prescribed the method in which alleged error could be stated and defended.

We have seen that the Assembly of Detroit in vetoing the transfer of Professor Briggs ostensibly refused to give reasons, because he was to be tried by his presbytery, and the Assembly did not wish to prejudge the case. In fact, he was arraigned before his presbytery and acquitted. The prosecuting committee then appealed to the Assembly of 1892, and that body sent the case back to the presbytery, direct-

ing it after amending the charges to try it again. This was done and the presbytery again acquitted him. The result was another appeal to the Assembly which met in 1893. This body took jurisdiction and pronounced the accused guilty, imposing the penalty of suspension from the ministry. The action was undoubtedly contrary to law and precedent. But the Assembly being the highest court of the church, no appeal could be taken from its sentence if it took jurisdiction.

The case of Doctor Briggs suffered from the complications and perplexities which he had deprecated when discussing the action of the Scotch Church against W. Robertson Smith. This was partly because he had laid himself open to attack by the number of topics which he had discussed in his inaugural. My own case was comparatively simple. No doubt the Cincinnati presbytery would have been glad to be excused from trying me. In the first place, Doctor Evans shared my guilt. But he had accepted a call to Wales, and had received a

letter of dismissal stating that he was in good standing. His move was justified by the state of his health. I myself recommended him to accept the offer. Had he remained in this country he would have been under the continued strain of accusation and recrimination, and would have had to defend himself both before the court and before the public. There was hope that in his native air and in peaceful surroundings he might still have some years of usefulness. The hope was disappointed, for he died soon after reaching Wales and before taking up his new duties.

Logically, of course, the party which prosecuted Doctor Briggs must prosecute me. Various attempts to avoid this need not be rehearsed here. A resolution offered in presbytery which virtually condemned me without trial was met by me with the statement that if I had violated any law of the church I was ready to meet the accusation in an orderly way. A committee of presbytery appointed to consider the subject of erroneous teaching endeavored to get

from the trustees of the seminary a pledge that the doctrine of errancy of the Scriptures should not be taught there. Of course to speak of a doctrine of errancy as if we had formulated such a dogma was absurd. All that we had tried to do was to show that the doctrine of inerrancy was not consistent with the facts. Some private letters urged me to pledge myself not to teach errancy. My reply was that such a pledge would be taken as a retraction of what I had written. And to one correspondent I wrote: "Before I give assurance that I will not teach errancy, ought I not to have assurance that I shall not be called upon by resolutions in presbytery to commit myself to what I cannot assert? It is clear that a long discussion is before us. Suppose that one of my students calls upon me in class to explain an apparent discrepancy in Scripture. You wish the assurance that I will tell him that the discrepancy *must* have come in in transmission. Unfortunately, I have given enough attention to textual criticism to know that not

all the discrepancies can be accounted for in that way." In the same connection I pointed out that the concern of the exegete is with the meaning of the text he studies, the present text, that is. The existence of original manuscripts in which no discrepancies occurred is a speculative hypothesis which he has no interest in affirming or denying. As a matter of fact, and as I pointed out, I had always been exceedingly careful—perhaps too much so—not to unsettle the faith of my students. Our trustees assured the committee of presbytery that nothing had been taught or would be taught in the seminary which would unsettle the faith of the students in the Word of God, or lessen their loyalty to the system of doctrine embodied in the standards of the church.

But this did not satisfy the conservative minority. They recommended that the board should require the professors every three years or oftener to pledge themselves not to teach or publish the doctrine of the errancy of the Holy Scriptures as given by

the Holy Ghost. Our misfortune was that neither trustees nor faculty were united. Professor Roberts was openly against me, as now was Doctor Morris. Strenuous as he had been in defending his liberty, he could not see his way to speak for mine. Of course I did not mean to assume any attitude of defiance or insubordination, either to the presbytery or the board, only to defend the rights of a Presbyterian minister, ready to answer to the presbytery in the matter of doctrine, and to submit to any action of the trustees if they thought me unfitted for my chair. Having failed to put a muzzle on me, the conservatives resolved on a trial, and the committee on erroneous teaching recommended that course.

Owing to circumstances which I need not detail, the trial did not begin until November, 1892. Meanwhile the hands of the conservatives had been strengthened by a deliverance of the Assembly which declared it to be the doctrine of the church that the Scriptures as they came from God

(that is, the original autographs) were without error, and declared also that ministers who change their belief on this point should withdraw from the church; in case they did not do so, their presbyteries should deal with them for violation of their ordination vows. This demand that ministers who were not in harmony with what was alleged to be the true doctrine should withdraw had been voiced before in various publications, and with reference to it I had looked into the subject of the obligations taken at ordination, and had published two articles on the subject in the New York *Evangelist*. The purpose of the articles was to show that a certain amount of liberty must be allowed the minister, and that one who believed himself to hold the faith would be guilty of the sin of schism if for light reasons he left the church. One expression (possibly unfortunate) was misunderstood and was made the basis of the first charge against me. As the charge was not sustained, we need not concern ourselves with it.

The *Book of Discipline* at that time forbade the parties in a trial to be represented by counsel. One of the ministers on the prosecuting committee had practised law some years before entering the ministry, so that without violating the letter of the law the committee had the advantage of professional advice. The indictment they drew up was acknowledged to be in better form than the one on which Doctor Briggs was tried in the presbytery of New York. It had at least one advantage—the point at issue was the simple one of inerrancy, and the case was not complicated by the various charges to which the New York committee gave their attention. Certain technical questions (as to the competence of the committee) which Doctor Briggs had to argue were absent in my case. The only matter of procedure on which I raised a question was whether three members of presbytery who had published essays pronouncing me guilty should be allowed to sit and vote on the case. All three, after saying that they thought they could give

a fair verdict, were allowed to take their seats, and, as was to be expected, all three voted against me. If the case had been in a civil court, I could have challenged them, and they would not have been a part of the jury. Other members had shown prejudice and could have been challenged for that reason.

In our own faculty the only one who stood by me was Professor Arthur C. McGiffert, who had recently become professor of ecclesiastical history at Lane Seminary. Doctor Morris, my one-time teacher and my colleague, could not see his way clear to vote for me and absented himself from the trial. This he told me was on account of his friendship for me. I urged him not to let personal considerations influence him, and said I thought it would be better for him to do his duty as he saw it. Doctor Roberts told me that he was sorry to take a stand against a colleague. But I assured him that I understood his position, and had no doubt that he was acting conscientiously. My personal relations with these gentlemen

were always friendly, and in fact I had not an enemy in the presbytery. Whether pressure was brought to bear on some of the younger men I do not know. It was reported that some lobbying was done by the prosecuting committee, but I do not wish to lay any stress on mere rumor.

The church in which the sessions were held was the First Presbyterian, the same one in which Lyman Beecher was tried, though not the same building. The two questions which I was called upon to argue were, first, whether the charges were sufficient, that is, if the allegations contained in them are true, do the facts alleged prove that a crime has been committed? The other was whether the facts alleged are proved by competent testimony. Since the testimony was all taken from my published pamphlet, the second question would be easily answered, and my main task was to show that what I had said was not contrary either to the Confession or to the affirmations of Scripture itself. As I pointed out, the two charges were one in substance;

namely, that I denied that the Holy Spirit so controlled the writers of Scripture as to make their utterances absolutely truthful, or, as otherwise stated, that I denied the inspiration of the writers in the sense in which inspiration is attributed to them by the Holy Scriptures themselves and by the Confession.

The belief of the committee may be stated in this way: It is a fundamental doctrine of the Presbyterian Church that the Holy Spirit so controlled the writers of Holy Scripture as to make their utterances absolutely truthful when interpreted in their natural and intended sense. Passing over the word *intended*, by which we may conjecture that the committee endeavored to leave a way open by which to escape from the rigor of their own doctrine, we note what I called attention to in my response—that a fundamental doctrine of the church ought to be stated in so many words in the Confession. But we do not find it so stated. The passages cited in support of the proposition magnify the excellence of the Word

of God in Scripture as a source of belief and practice, which was just what I had always emphasized. The only passage which seemed to teach what the committee asserted was the following:

“By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each passage containeth, yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come.”

But, examining the passage, we find that it has nothing to do with the soundness of ministers. It is from the chapter on saving faith, and defines what the one who has that faith will do. He will accept not the whole text of Scripture but whatsoever is revealed therein. And this is asserted to be commands, threatenings, and promises. Had the Westminster divines meant that every believer must read the whole Bible with the conviction that its every state-

ment is true in the natural sense of the words—if that had been their intention, they should have ruled that every candidate for admission to the church should profess faith in the inerrancy of Scripture. It is well known that this has never been the rule of the church. It never occurs to a pastor to tell an inquirer that first of all he must accept the inerrancy of the original autographs before he can call himself a Christian.

To support their claim the committee cited seventy-one texts from the Bible itself, with references to eight others, and it was a part of my duty to examine all these in detail. I may spare myself that labor here, only remarking that many of the passages were irrelevant. Those which mentioned the Word of God had no reference to the text of Scripture, but meant the word as spoken by the prophets. Their inspiration I had never denied, but we were now concerned with the text of Scripture, which contains much besides prophetic discourses.

Among the specifications in the indictment one stated that I affirmed that the last twenty-seven chapters of the Book of Isaiah were not written by him. I need not dwell upon this charge. Almost every commentator who has written on Isaiah for half a century or more holds to the composite nature of the book. If they are all wrong, there is no such thing as Biblical science. The great prophet of the second half of the book has not attached his name to his work, but that he did not live in the time of Hezekiah is manifest in every chapter.

More offense was perhaps taken at my treatment of the author of the Book of Chronicles. After pointing out the discrepancies between his book and the Books of Kings I attempted to account for them in this way: "Remembering that the Chronicler was much farther away in time from the events narrated, we find it natural that he should have an exaggerated idea of the resources of his country in the days of her glory." The problem here is one of the most difficult presented to the historian

by the Old Testament narrative. The two pictures of the history of Israel given in the Books of Kings, on one hand, and in Chronicles, on the other, are irreconcilable. Attempts to harmonize them are unsuccessful. Orthodox historians have usually taken the later material (Chronicles) as the basis of their work, and have presented a story untrue to the facts. Perhaps it would have been better for me to advocate the exclusion of Chronicles from the canon. But that would have opened up the whole question of the formation of the canon, into which I did not propose to go. I had no intention of impugning the good faith of the Chronicler. He was the child of his time, and in fact throws a welcome light on the conceptions of post-Biblical Judaism. His value as a teacher of faith and morals must be judged in accordance with the facts of the record, and those facts are as I stated.

In reply to my objections the committee reproduced the usual dogmatic argument, depending for the most part on the now superannuated work of James Ban-

nerman, *Inspiration: the Infallible Truth and Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures*. Their most astonishing statement was that only an inerrant Scripture can have power to accomplish in the human soul the work for which the revelation has been given; that is, the work of conversion and regeneration. Since by their emphasis on the original autographs the committee conceded that there are errors in our present text, they virtually confessed that our present Bible has lost the power of converting sinners. Throughout their argument the committee confused the inspiration of the prophets, the orators who delivered God's message, with the impulse which led the scribes to preserve not only that message but also the history of their own times. The claim of the *speaker* to speak for God is admitted—certainly I had never questioned it. But so far as I know there is no text in which the *writer* of the historical books claims the prophetic inspiration. Yet the prosecution went so far as to claim that the denial of inerrancy was

equivalent to the unpardonable sin—the sin against the Holy Ghost. When it came to that I protested that they were merely attempting to arouse prejudice, and I challenged them to amend the charges by inserting one accusing me of that sin. Thereupon they explained that they only meant that my position led logically to that sin. I then pressed them to tell whether they agreed with their authorities, Doctors Hodge and Warfield, who asserted that one proved error would not only refute their doctrine but would invalidate the Bible's own claim to inspiration. But they were under no obligation to answer my question, and it was ignored. They reached the climax of their argument when they compared the higher criticism (for it was really this that they were fighting) to the jinnee in the *Thousand and One Nights* let out of the jar by the fisherman. In me they thought the dreadful ogre might be crushed, and they besought the presbytery not to let the opportunity slip. That they over-rated my importance and also the power

of presbytery is sufficiently evident by this time.

As I have intimated, there never was any doubt as to the result of the trial. The final vote suspended me from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church "until such time as I should make manifest to the presbytery my renunciation of the errors I had been found to hold and my solemn purpose not to hold or teach them." The vote on suspension was thirty-one to twenty-six. Apparently some who voted to sustain the charges thought the penalty too severe. The presbytery expressed the kindest feeling toward me, and protested that they took the action only because the interests of truth required it.

I at once gave notice of appeal to Synod. Some readers may wonder why, since I knew what the verdict was certain to be, I should have taken the pains again to argue the case, and since it was equally certain that the appeal to the Assembly would be fruitless why I should have carried the case through to the highest court.

I can truly say that litigation was not to my taste, but I thought it my duty to carry the case through for its educational value. The wide attention given to my case and that of Doctor Briggs would help some minds to a better, that is a more historical, view of the Bible. After the Synod of Ohio refused to sustain my appeal I did raise the question with some of my friends whether it was worth while to carry the matter to the Assembly. Their opinion was in favor of the course I took, just on the ground I have mentioned—the educational value of the arguments. The Assembly of 1894 met at Saratoga and I was heard. The misfortune of an appellant is that he must point out errors of proceeding made in the lower court, and the merits of the case receive slight attention. After my argument and that of Doctor McKibbin were heard the members of the court were given five minutes each to express their opinion. One man said something like this: “We have heard a good deal about the Christian character of this ap-

pellant; it reminds me of what the little boy said when asked whether their mule was tame. His reply was: 'He's pretty tame in front but he's awful wild behind.'” This gave a tinge of hilarity to the session. The verdict was as we expected—a refusal to sustain the appeal, which meant that the sentence of suspension stood. Among the friends who stood up for me I was glad to have at my right hand Professor George Foot Moore, of Andover Theological Seminary. After the verdict Professor Moore felt that he could not remain in the Presbyterian Church, and thus the church lost from its ministry the leading Old Testament scholar of this country. The conservatives, of course, congratulated themselves that they had driven the higher criticism from the church.

Still Useful

VII. Still Useful

I HOPE the title to this chapter does not assume too much. All I wish to assert is that the action of the courts of the church did not silence me. I had tried to serve the church for nearly twenty years. This service was now at an end. My connection with Lane Seminary had ceased before the final decision of my case. The Assembly of 1893 (the one which suspended Doctor Briggs) rather went out of its way to condemn the Lane trustees for reporting me among the professors. The charter of the seminary only required that the professors should be members of the Presbyterian Church, and my suspension from the ministry did not deprive me of membership in the church. The trustees were within their rights, therefore, when they resolved not to take action at once looking to my vacating my chair. They resolved to retain

me until the final issue of the case. But at the same time they forbade my teaching. The result would have been to increase the distrust of the conservatives without gaining the support of any considerable element in the church. I appeared before the board and urged a definitely liberal policy, including the election of liberal men to the vacant chairs. Lane would thus have stood by Union, and while it might have had up-hill work for a while, I had no doubt that in the long run the two institutions would have had the confidence of thinking men. The trustees, however, could not see their way to adopt my suggestion, and their difficulty was increased by the attitude of Doctor Morris, who was sure that I had ruined the seminary. I insisted therefore on my resignation being accepted—this was in 1893, before my appeal to the Assembly had been heard. The result of Doctor Morris's management, which now came to the front, was to make Doctor McKibbin, my prosecutor, a member of the faculty and, finally, president of the seminary.

From 1893 until January, 1898, I was without official position. As I intimated in an earlier chapter, I always felt that a seminary professor had a duty to perform toward the church at large. My opportunity came when I was invited by the editors of the *International Critical Commentary* to prepare the volume on the Books of Samuel. I was now able to give attention to this work, which made me realize more than ever the need of a really critical study of the Old Testament. Not only does the text of these two books need correction; the fact of their compilation from different sources soon forces itself on the careful student. Before my volume was ready, however, I was invited by the authorities of Union Seminary to deliver a course of lectures on the Ely Foundation. I accepted the invitation and chose for my subject "The Bible and Islam." The preparation of the lectures gave me an opportunity to observe the rigid theory of inspiration held by Moslem theologians, and also to estimate the influence which our Bible had in Muhammad's thought.

In obedience to the sentence of suspension, I refrained from preaching even in other than Presbyterian pulpits. In 1897, however, I was offered a position at Amherst as professor of Biblical literature and associate pastor of the College Church. Although I informed the association of Congregational ministers that I could not bring a letter of dismissal certifying to my good standing, I was cordially admitted to membership. My Amherst service need not be described. I had opportunity to see my commentary through the press, and also to write my *Old Testament History*—a volume in the International Theological Library. I had been invited to prepare this volume while at Lane Seminary, but had declined because such a volume would be likely to scandalize the conservatives. After my suspension that reason no longer had force and I prepared the volume.

Then came six years (1907–13) at the Meadville Theological School. Here I was asked to lecture on the general history of religion, something which would really re-



Henry Preserved Smith (centre) in 1924, as Librarian of the Union Theological Seminary

quire omniscience in the professor. What I was able to do was quite rudimentary, but I trust was correct as far as it went. I tried to visualize the whole religious development of mankind as a single process. For comparative purposes the study was valuable, in that it threw light on some of the obscure features of Israel's religion. My resulting study of that religion was published in 1914, and has been a useful book, as I am assured.

My last period of active service was at Union and covered the years from 1913 to 1925. Here my main work was that of librarian. Possibly my long acquaintance with theological literature fitted me for this work, in which I am glad to say I met the expectations of my colleagues. I had opportunity to observe the increasing importance of the library as a part of the seminary equipment. The method of instruction has changed from the few-book to the many-book. The student is expected to engage in research on his own account and to familiarize himself with a wide range

of literature. The library must put him in possession not of a few "standard works" but of all that has been written on his subject. It has been a satisfaction to me to feel that I was instrumental in making the library more adequate to meet present-day requirements. The existing debate between Fundamentalists and Modernists emphasizes the need of a complete outfit of documents on all sides of the questions under discussion, and what is true of this particular exigency is likely to verify itself numberless times in the future. No institution could be better fitted to meet the problems that must arise than is our interdenominational seminary, where emphasis is laid on the essentials of Christianity but where the freedom of scholarship has been and will continue to be heroically defended. I count it a great happiness that my last period of service was given to such an institution.

In this year (1925), just fifty years after I was ordained by presbytery, I thought it best to resign my work into the hands of

a younger man. Looking back, I find much to be grateful for. First the loyal support and loving companionship of my dear wife; next the friendship of colleagues; then the opportunity to serve Christ and His church; finally the privilege of contributing something to the advance of science.

“And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar.”

And now the reader who has had the patience to follow me thus far may ask the question that others have asked: “Was it worth your while to unsettle the faith of the simple-minded Christian believer by your discussion of critical questions?” The answer must be the answer to the general inquiry whether education has any value. It would be possible to argue that the *sancta simplicitas* of the peasant woman who brought her fagot to the fire that burned John Huss should not be disturbed. In like manner the good lady who complained to Doctor Roberts that the Lane Seminary

professors were taking her Bible away from her might conceivably be let alone in her belief in every statement of the sacred Book; or the member of the Assembly of 1894 who protested that he accepted the whole Bible "from Generations to Revelations" might be spared by the scholars. But it is plain that in these cases the remedy is in their own hands. No one can take the Bible from them. All they have to do is to let the higher criticism alone. But the teacher has others to consider. The minds of our young people are keen to know all that has been discovered. Set them to read the Bible, assuring them that it is the inerrant Word of God—that God is "inverbate" in it as He was incarnate in Christ—and they will at once raise questions that you will find difficulty in answering. A minister asked me once whether he ought to give his people some information concerning the higher criticism. My reply was: "Better for them to get it from you than from the Sunday newspapers." This is one of the facts we have to face—the eagerness

of the public press to exploit sensation of any kind. The only way is frankly to give an historical view, showing how the self-revelation of God perfected itself through the experiences of fallible men—in diverse portions and in diverse manners—till it reached its climax in Christ.

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